

U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran. Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds. Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through longterm efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

As the Center for American Progress documents in its last quarterly report (October 24, 2006), the benefits of strategic redeployment are significant:

Restore the strength of U.S. ground troops. Exercise a strategic shift to meet global threats from Islamic extremists. Prevent U.S. troops from being caught in the middle of a civil war in Iraq. Avert mass sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq. Provide time for Iraq's elected leaders to strike a power-sharing agreement. Empower Iraq's security forces to take control. Get Iraqis fighting to end the occupation to lay down their arms. Motivate the U.N., global, and regional powers to become more involved in Iraq. Give the U.S. the moral, political, and military power to deal with Iran's attempt to develop nuclear weapons. Prevent an outbreak of isolationism in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the president should surge diplomatically. A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former secretary of state, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

The high-profile envoy would also address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of Hezbollah and Syria in Lebanon, and Iran's rising influence in the region. The aim would not be necessarily to solve these problems, but to prevent them from getting worse and to show the Arab and Muslim world that we share their concerns about the problems in this region.

Mr. Speaker, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, a definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a new direction.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELCH of Vermont addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms.

MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TIMES ARE CHANGING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen that were watching or here in the gallery, I am a freshman Congressperson. I am from Tennessee. And last March I came up and I stood in that gallery and I looked down at this body and I wondered if I wanted to be a part of it. The decision was made partially by me by filing for office and waging a campaign. But the decision was eventually made by my voters in the 9th District in Tennessee who elected me. They elected 49 new Congresspeople, 41 of which are Democrats; and we have just completed our first week in office.

I felt like it was appropriate at the finish of this week, Mr. Speaker, to give some type of report to the people of what we have experienced as freshman Congresspeople. I don't come here like Alexander Haig might have and assume control. We have that freshman president, and I am not that freshman president, nor did I seek to be one. It is PAUL HODES from New Hampshire who is a very fine freshman legislator.

But a lot has happened in this week. We all came up here with a lot of interest in seeing America be better. And America is better. In just the one week we have been here, we have been privileged to be a part of this body. We have seen the first lady ever elected Speaker of a legislative body of this nature in the United States elected, NANCY PELOSI. It was a historic moment.

And earlier today one of our freshmen, Congressman BILBRAY, talked about the fact that some years ago on this date the resolution was introduced to give women the right to vote. That resolution passed in my home State of Tennessee in 1920, when Tennessee was the perfect 36, and gave women the right to vote.

It has been a long time, and a change was coming, and a change has happened. And it is great to have a woman, an opportunity seen with the election of NANCY PELOSI.

This week, we have seen changes in the way lobbyists and legislators relate, and that is one of the reasons why I think Congress has one of the worst reputations of any collective group of professionals or government officials in this country and why some of us were elected, to see a change in that culture. And ties were cut between lobbyists and legislators which never should have existed. I was proud to vote for that and see that as part of the 100 hours of change that the Democratic leadership is bringing about.

The PAYGO policy brings some fiscal sanity to what has otherwise been a kind of runaway process where this country is in great economic distress. We have had three different bipartisan groups that we have had orientation sessions with. In each one of those classes we have been told that our economic situation is dire. The same about our foreign policy and the same about our environment and our health care system.

There are difficult times in America. It seems good, but it really isn't. The underpinnings are not there.

This week PAYGO is important. Cutting the ties between legislators and lobbyists was important. And it was also extremely important what we did today. We passed the minimum wage.

And I can't go without quoting President Franklin Roosevelt, one of my heroes, who said, "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have too much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." Today we provided for those that have too little and we did right.

And I want to quote Hubert Humphrey, a great American whose bust I looked at outside of the Senate, looked at with reverence. "The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

I think in the tradition of some great Americans we have acted today on the minimum wage. We will act on stem cell research and other issues. And we've acted on the 9/11 Commission reports. Most of this was done in a bipartisan manner. Not all of it.

And it has given me the opportunity, which I want to take today, to quote a line which I have read for years and thought about when I thought about these halls, not thinking of myself being a Member of this body, which is a great honor coming to me at a late time in life, after spending 24 years in the Tennessee State Senate.

"Come Senators, Congressmen, please heed the call. Don't stand in the doorway, don't block up the hall."

□ 1815

For he who gets hurt will be he who has stalled. There's a battle outside and it's raging. It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls. For the times they are a changin'. Bob Dylan, Robert Zimmerman, was right. The times they are a changin'.

There is a Democratic majority. I am proud to be of it, as are 41 other freshmen. I can testify today that America is in better shape than it was a week ago.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIREN). The gentleman is reminded to